

Message Text

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ACTION HEW-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 INR-07 IO-13 MED-02 NSAE-00

PA-01 DHA-02 SCA-01 OES-06 USIA-06 PRS-01 CIAE-00

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INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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DEPT PASS DHEW FOR FISCHER

E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PORS, AMED, UR

SUBJECT: FLU EPIDEMIC IN MOSCOW, TALLINN, AND KIEV

REF: LENINGRAD 0051

1. SUMMARY. REPORTS FROM TALLINN, KIEV, AND MOSCOW INDICATE THAT THESE CITIES HAVE BEEN HARD HIT BY FLU DURING EARLY DAYS OF 1977. ONE SOVIET SOURCE CLAIMED EXISTENCE OF SWING FLU IN TALLINN AND MOSCOW.

SOVIET HEALTH AUTHORITIES ADMIT EXISTENCE OF EPIDEMIC IN MOSCOW, BUT DENY APPEARANCE OF SWING FLU. SOVIET OFFICIALS RESPONDING TO EPIDEMIC BY URGING USE OF MASKS, AVOIDANCE OF PUBLIC GATHERINGS AND TRANSPORT, AND EXTENSION OF SCHOOL VACATIONS. SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAVE ALSO QUARANTINED AT LEAST ONE HOSPITAL AS WELL AS, ACCORDING TO UNCONFIRMED REPORTS, THE DORMITORIES OF SEVERAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. DESPITE THE APPARENT SCOPE OF FLU PROBLEMS, SOVIETS HAVE PROVIDED NO EVIDENCE THAT THEY ARE ENGAGED IN WIDE SCALE INNOCULATION PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. MOSCOW. EMBASSY HAS OBSERVED DURING PAST MONTH GROWING

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EVIDENCE OF IMPACT OF FLU EPIDEMIC. MANY LOCAL EMPLOYEES HAVE REMAINED AWAY FROM WORK WITH FLU, SOVIET COUNTERPARTS IN VARIOUS ECHELONS OF SOVIET GOVERNMENT HAVE BEEN ABSENT IN NOTICEABLE NUMBERS, AND SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY AGREEMENT EXCHANGEES HAVE REPORTED HIGH INCIDENCE OF FLU IN THE VARIOUS INSTITUTES OF USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES TO WHICH THEY ARE ASSIGNED. ONE EXCHANGEER WORKING AT THE SHEMYAKIN INSTITUTE DESCRIBED A RECENT

NASAL SPRAY INNOCULATION PROGRAM AGAINST THE FLUE IN HIS INSTITUTE, BUT THAT IS THE ONLY REPORT WE HAVE OF ORGANIZED INNOLCUATIONS EFFORTS. REPORTS OF THE QUARANTINING OF HOSPITALS AND DORMORITORIES HAVE ALSO COME TO EMBASSY'S ATTENTION. EMBASSY DOCTOR DISCOVERED IN EARLY DECEMBER, WHEN TRYING TO VISIT THE WIFE OF PANAM EMPLOYEE, THAT THE HOSPITAL SHE WAS IN WAS QUARANTINED BECAUSE OF THE FLU. A SOVIET SOURCE (PARA 3 BELOW) HAS ADVISED THAT DORMITORIES IN A NUMBER OF MOSCOW POLYTECHNICAL INSTITUTES AND THE CONVERSATORY HAVE BEEN QUARANTINED FOR PERIODS OF TIME. AMERICAN EXCHANGE STUDENTS AT MOSCOW STATE UNIVERSITY, HOWEVER, HAVE NOTED NO SUCH OCCURRENCE THERE.

3. EMBASSY HAS ALSO RECEIVED A REPORT THAT SWINE FLU HAS STRUCK IN TALLINN AND MOSCOW. A SOVIET OFFICIAL IN THE FOREIGN RELATIONS SECTION OF USSR ACADEMY OF SCIENCES RECENTLY TOLD AN EMBOFF OF THE APPEARANCE OF THAT VARIETY OF FLU IN THE SOVIET AND ESTONIAN CAPITALS. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, MASKS ARE BEING WORN AND PUBLIC GATHERINGS BANNED IN TALLINN. WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO CONFIRM THIS REPORT. PREVIOUS AMCONSUL LENINGRAD INQUIRY AT USSR ALL UNION INFLUENZA INSTITUTE DREW A STRONG NEGATIVE ANSWER (SEE REFTEL) AS DID SCIOFF QUESTIONING OF A MOH OFFICIAL JANUARY 27. DR. BALABOLKIN OF USSR MOH DID CONFIRM, HOWEVER, EXISTENCE OF A FLU EPIDEMIC IN MOSCOW THOUGH HE OBSERVED THAT IT WAS BEGINNING TO ABATE.

4. KIEV ADVANCE PARTY REPORTS FLU EPIDEMIC IN THE UKRAINIAN CAPITAL, CITING EXTENSION OF SCHOOL HOLIDAYS IN JANUARY, PROLIFERATION OF GUAZE MASKS ON FOOD STORE EMPLOYEES AS WELL AS OF SIGNS THROUGHOUT KIEV WARNING OF FLU AND ITS COMPLICATIONS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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IN ADDITION, THE KIEV OBLAST PAPER (KIYIV(SKA PRAVDA) OFFERED INDIRECT EVIDENCE OF A WIDESPREAD FLU PROBLEM IN A JANUARY 12 ARTICLE ENTITLED QUOTE TAKE CARE OF COLDS UNQUOTE. THE AUTHOR OBSERVED THAT THE SAME TYPE OF VIRUS WHICH APPEARED IN 1976 IS AGAIN CAUSING TROYBLE AND HE WENT ON TO LIST A VARIETY OF REMEDIES, INCLUDING RECOMMENDATIONS TO AVOID PUBLIC PLACES. KIEV AUTHORITIES HAVE URGED AVOIDANCE OF PUBLIC MEETINGS AND TRANSPORT BUT NO INNOCULATION PROGRAM HAS BEEN OBSERVED. FROM KIEV HAVE COME THE ONLY REPORTS, THOUGH UNSUBSTANTIATED, OF DEATHS ATTRIBUTED TO FLU. TOON

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Concepts: EPIDEMICS, COMMUNICABLE DISEASES
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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